The Institute for Educational Advancement (IEA) is dedicated to the intellectual, creative, and personal growth in our nation’s gifted and high potential youth. Central to the mission of IEA is a commitment to the development of the whole child through engaging learning experiences that promote optimal challenge, mentorship, exploration of ideas, and recognition of personal potential. IEA seeks to connect like-minded individuals and supports a diverse community that creates a sense of belonging and affirmation.

Connecting bright minds; nurturing intellectual and personal growth
Those of you reading this newsletter are likely familiar with the dearth of programs and services for students with advanced intellectual potential. The abilities of too many young people, from every community and culture, are not coming close to reaching the depth of their capabilities. Regardless of being identified as a “gifted” learner or not, children in our educational systems are capable of accomplishing far more than they are asked to do. It remains troubling that, for decades, American students have trailed in international comparisons with students from other countries, they have dropped out of school altogether due to boredom and lack of challenge, they feel unseen and unheard, and that only 28 states actually require identification and services. This has been named a quiet crisis since 1993.

For over 16 years, we have been working to assist individual children in understanding and exploring their intellectual and personal potential to the fullest. We have listened to students, parents, educators and community leaders about their concerns for children who continue to be denied access to challenging educational experiences, and are tired of being told, “Slow down, you learn too fast.”

As a nation this has to stop. It is time for us to make a change in our local communities and in our national expectations of education. Every child deserves to learn something new every day.

At IEA, we are continuing to effect change through new efforts in public policy. Collaborating with individuals and organizations that care about these young people has created a movement that is gaining traction. In the coming months, we look forward to sharing results of our initial efforts, which we hope will impact gifted education on a national scale. It is time – it can be done.

Dear Friends,

At first people refuse to believe that a strange new thing can be done, then they begin to hope it can be done, then they see it can be done – then it is done and all the world wonders why it was not done centuries ago.”
~ The Secret Garden, Frances Hodgson Burnett
Mark Your Calendars!

PROGRAMS

ACADEMY
Winter: January 17—March 13, 2017
Application Deadline: January 10, 2017
Spring: April 17—June 3, 2017
Application Deadline: April 10, 2017
Summer I: June 19—June 30, 2017
Summer II: July 10—July 28, 2017
(Summer dates subject to change)

CAROLINE D. BRADLEY SCHOLARSHIP
Application Postmark Deadline: April 11, 2017
Final Eligible SAT Date: March 11, 2017
Final Eligible ACT Date: April 8, 2017
Bradley Seminar: March 10—12, 2017

EXPLORE
Session I: June 17—July 7, 2017
Session II: July 8—July 28, 2017
Both Sessions (6 weeks): June 17—July 28, 2017
Application Deadline: April 10, 2017

YUNASA
Yunasa (MI): July 29—August 5, 2017
Yunasa West (CO): June 11—June 18, 2017
Application Deadline: March 6, 2017
Leadership Deadline: February 15, 2017

COMMUNITY EVENTS

Tree Trimming: December 9, 2016
Summer Spotlight: July, 2017

GIFTED SUPPORT GROUP MEETINGS (GSG)

JANUARY 11, 2017
"Mindfulness and the Whole Child"

FEBRUARY 23, 2017
"Gifted Teacher Panel: Stories & Strategies from the Classroom"

MARCH 29, 2017
"IQ Testing & Assessment: What is Gifted Testing & Why Does it Matter?"

APRIL 19, 2017
"Life After High School: Q&A with IEA Alumni"

MAY 16, 2017
"Gifted Resource Swap & Play Date"

EXPLORE
Externships for high school students offering the unique opportunity to learn about working in a variety of professional settings, help solve real-world problems, and make professional connections with bright minds. (Los Angeles Area, 9th-11th grade)

YUNASA
Pioneering and award-winning summer camps unite highly able youngsters with experts in the social and emotional development of gifted children to teach campers how to balance all aspects of their lives. (10-15 year olds)

PUBLIC POLICY INITIATIVE
IEA is currently conducting a national poll concerning the public’s perception of gifted education. This information will support messaging, advocacy, and bolster community efforts to affect policy.

OTHER SERVICES
Consulting Services, Gifted Resource Center (GRC), Gifted Support Group Meetings

Keep an eye out for our new online applications!
FIT OVER NAME

LeeAnn is a CDB Alum who's journey choosing a school is insightful and inspiring. LeeAnn is an actor, director, and theatre administrator based in the San Francisco Bay Area.

The conversation about “fit over name” is one I’ve had at many different points in my life. I first grappled with this question as I selected a high school. As a CDB Scholar, I received gentle guidance from IEA during this process. Initially, I considered attending a boarding school on the East Coast; ultimately, I wasn’t ready to be away from home. I ended up attending a Bay Area high school that wasn’t a huge name, but had an incomparable drama program—going to that school is arguably the reason I have a career in theater today.

Four years later, as I was going through the college process, I again faced the challenges of “fit over name.” This time, my experience was a little more complicated. When I toured the college I would later attend, it really didn’t feel like “me.” I wanted to go to a smaller and quirkier college out of state, not a large, more traditional university in Southern California. It felt all wrong, but I applied anyway. As it happened, this school offered an extremely generous scholarship—it had been made clear that I’d go to the school with the best financial aid package, so the decision was made. The process was a difficult one for me. As a CDB alum, the experience of not having access to the education I wanted was a foreign one. I also realized how much I had internalized the value of a prestigious name, no matter how much I believed that fit was all that mattered at the end of the day. To me, it felt like I was heading to a school that had neither.

The truth is, going to a school that wasn’t instantly the perfect fit for me was one of the luckiest things that could have happened. Throughout my four years, I was given ample opportunities to practice open-mindedness, resiliency, humility, and initiative. I learned how to identify my needs, articulate them, and problem-solve when they weren’t being met. As a direct result of this, my college experience was a joyous one. I got all the things that I truly wanted out of college: lifelong friendships, inspiring classes and mentors, an empowering sense of community, and more.

I’m so grateful that I got the opportunity to learn how to be an advocate for myself.

In the early days of freshman year, I often thought about the phrase “bloom where you’re planted.” It is this that I feel is most important to add to the “fit over name” conversation now.

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Two years out of school, I’m still weighing the balance between fit and name, passion and ambition, present satisfaction and long-term strategy. The truth is, we often don’t have control over the environments we’re in— and even when we do, we can sabotage ourselves by setting too much stock in the decision alone. Success, to me, is more about giving myself ways to thrive even without the perfect fit or the brand name. To reference the earlier botanical expression, I am the flower blossoming under harsh conditions; in college, I figured out that I’m a gardener, too.

ON TEACHING

A CONVERSATION WITH GRAYSON KENT

Grayson is a beloved Academy teacher who has introduced our students to Paleozoology, Mammalogy, Reptiles, and so much more.

What are you passionate about?
I am passionate about many things: animals, zoology, paleontology, exotic animal ownership, heavy metal music, science-fiction and fantasy literature, my friends...

How does this inform your teaching?
I can best answer this question with a quote from my personal hero, Steve Irwin, better known to the world as the Crocodile Hunter: “I believe that education is all about being excited about something. Seeing passion and enthusiasm helps push an educational message.”

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6
I learned what a career in research looks like, I gained a lot of confidence from being independent and verbally participating in meetings.

Written by EXPLORE Extern Shruti Chidambaram

Sitting in a classroom everyday listening to a teacher makes for an adequate educational experience, but I always wanted to apply what I learned by actually doing something. Fortunately, this past summer, I had the opportunity to do exactly so through the EXPLORE program by working alongside Dr. Luciano Nocera at the Integrated Media Systems Center (IMSC) at the University of Southern California.

I had the chance to be a part of a new and ongoing research project, Analytical Technologies to Objectively Measure Human Performance (ATOM-HP), which aims to help cancer patients by recording their physical activity, ultimately giving them a more personally aligned treatment plan as a result of a more objective view of their performance. We ran patient recordings through a computer program to extract skeletal data and later wrote code to change the way in which the program recorded this data. This research project is soon going to be tested on military personnel to increase their efficiency.

I was fortunate to have a mentor who taught us several topics that many students are not exposed to in high school. More importantly, our mentor showed us how to use this knowledge in the context of this research. This is exactly the kind of learning I thrive on – applying knowledge for “real-world” purposes. Not only did I grow as a student, I grew as a person through EXPLORE. I gained poise in sharing thoughts at weekly meetings, and I became a better team player in a research setting. I truly am grateful for the opportunities EXPLORE has given me this past summer.

Externs Ravi Durairaj and Shruti Chidambaram with Mentor Dr. Luciano Nocera, USC IMSC
we had a great summer...

ON TEACHING (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4)

Have there ever been times when your lesson plan ended up taking a completely different trajectory due to the needs of the class?

Teaching for IEA has taught me patience and flexibility. My very first lesson for my very first class did not go according to plan. The class was about animal teeth and I had set up an activity where the kids had to try to identify animals and their diet from looking at various teeth and jaw specimens. As the students filtered in, they were able to identify every sample amongst themselves before class had even begun. Needless to say, I was not expecting this. The lesson wound up being primarily discussion-based, in which I let the kids talk about what they already knew and then expanded upon it. In the end, it wound up being a very productive lesson.

How do you balance being sensitive to the needs and desires of your students and going through course content?

As a teacher, it is vital to set goals. However, those goals must not come at the expense of the students. It is the teacher’s job to accomplish said goals using the abilities that the children themselves bring to the table.

Are there any strategies or principles that have helped you effectively teach gifted learners and manage a classroom?

Having genuine passion, admitting when you don’t know, and being able to improvise are all the hallmarks of a good teacher.
congratulations...

CDB CLASS OF 2016

Umar Ahmed Badami | Hillsborough, NJ
So-Jung An | Los Angeles, CA
Daniel Arad | Mountain View, CA
Montana Azzolini | Hoboken, NJ
Ava Balbuena | Sunland, CA
Hayden Best | San Angelo, TX
Manasa Bhimmaraju | Cupertino, CA
Rosa Bieber-Stanley | Albuquerque, NM
Molly Bradley | San Francisco, CA
Lucy Cai | Lexington, MA
Jamie Chen | Scottsbliff, NE
Sarah Chen | Houston, TX
Owen Dugan | Sleepy Hollow, NY
Lucas Eggers | Rochester, NY
Garrison Famiglio | State College, PA
Grace Holmes | Redwood City, CA
Aarthi Katakam | Princeton Junction, NJ
Andrej Klema | Ellicott City, MD
Fiona McCulloch | Oregon House, CA
Simon Messineo | Wellsboro, PA
Jeffrey Pan | Austin, TX
Sydney Roberts | San Francisco, CA

Kate Rush | Covington, LA
Dominic Somkhishvili | Sanford, FL
Anna Thornton | Georgetown, KY
Sofia Tomov | Knoxville, TN
Emmanuel Tran | Oakland, CA
Katherine Tung | Los Altos, CA
Jonah Yoshida | Honolulu, HI
Hannah Zhang | Irvine, CA

What types of schools are these new Scholars from?

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